

VZCZCXYZ0001
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAK #0134/01 0240803
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 240803Z JAN 08
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5014
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CDR USTRANSCOM INTEL CELL SCOTT AFB IL IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA//
RHMFISS/USAREUR POLAD HEIDELBERG GE IMMEDIATE
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 6198

S E C R E T ANKARA 000134

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/18/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH DEPUTY CHOD GEN. SAYGUN'S VISIT TO US

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (S) Summary: US-Turkish military-to-military relations are stronger now than at any time since 2003. GEN Saygun's January 15 visit to Baghdad has improved prospects for Turkey-Iraq cooperation on PKK terrorism and given impetus to bilateral dialogue. During January 29-30 High Level Defense Group (HLDG) and Saygun's counterpart meetings, we should take advantage of this environment to engage Turkey on the way forward against the PKK and lay out the building blocks of a new mil-mil relationship. We should also impress upon Turkey the threat posed by a nuclear-capable, ballistic missile-armed Iran, share views on integrating missile defense efforts, and identify ways to assist the modernization of Turkey's armed forces. While Saygun also wants to look toward a more modern US-Turkish military partnership, he will use his visit to the US primarily to consolidate US support on the PKK and gauge Turkey's kinetic PKK options for the spring and summer. End summary.

Enhanced Intelligence Sharing Bearing Fruit

12. (S) The creation of the Ankara Coordination Cell (ACC) and the Combined Intelligence Fusion Cell (CIFC) in November 2007 has changed the bilateral military dynamic. The ACC is a full-spectrum (intelligence and operations deconfliction) capability that is manned 24/7 by US and Turkish officers. Its mission includes assisting TGS with intelligence support; operationalizing that intelligence; and, where appropriate, assisting in the development of targeting information. The CIFC shares fused intelligence with TGS on PKK terrorists in northern Iraq utilizing MQ-1 Predator, RC-135 Rivet Joint, EP-3 aircraft, RQ-4 Global Hawk, U-2 imagery, and intelligence organizations supporting European Command. The ACC also seeks to build a foundation for long-term intelligence capacity building within TGS, one of several areas where we can improve allied interoperability.

Air Strikes Opening Political Space

13. (S) TGS has launched five air strikes at PKK terrorist targets in northern Iraq since December 16. The first was the largest and least well coordinated, with at least 12 aircraft hitting targets as far south as the PKK administrative headquarters on Qandil Mountain. Subsequent attacks have been smaller, closer to the Turkish border, and

conducted with more advance notice. While the actual damage is difficult to assess, the military operations have distracted, disrupted and confused the PKK. They have isolated the PKK. They have opened space for the Turkish government to proceed with the diplomatic, political, economic, and social steps that are necessary, together with the use of force, to resolve this longstanding terrorist problem.

Good Prospects for Increased Mil-Mil Cooperation with Iraq

14. (S) GEN Saygun's January 15 visit to Iraq paved the way for Turkish-Iraqi military coordination. Meeting in Baghdad while TUAF air strikes were underway in northern Iraq, GEN Saygun and his Iraqi counterpart GEN Abadi agreed on common goals in their fight against terrorism and affirmed mutual interest in more military cooperation, including in training and operations. GEN Saygun invited GEN Abadi for a reciprocal visit to Turkey by March. We expect that President Talabani will visit Ankara in coming weeks. Further senior and working level contacts are in the works. These contacts can smooth out tensions related to the PKK and buttress our common, broader goals for Iraq.

Iran and Missile Defense

15. (S) The military dislikes Iran's fundamentalist Shiite government and recalls the years of shelter Iran provided to PKK fighters. Turkish officers and the government view Iran's nuclear program and missile capability as a regional threat. In missile defense threat scenarios conducted in Ankara with the US Missile Defense Agency, the principal threat source was Iran. Despite limited, local cooperation with Iran against PKK terrorists in the tri-border area, the military continues to brief its concerns about an Iran-inspired "Shiite arc" of states extending from Central Asia to Lebanon and the Gulf. It is essential that we reinforce the TGS perception of the threat posed by a nuclear-armed and ballistic-missile equipped Iran through regular consultations and intelligence sharing, particularly post-NIE. This can be a unifying theme for US-Turkish mil-mil collaboration in the years to come.

16. (C) Turkey is examining its air and missile defense needs. The military is keenly interested in the US missile defense concept and how it fits in with missile defense discussions currently underway in NATO. Turkish officials will welcome any information we can share on the way ahead in this area.

Civil-Military Relations Still Problematic

17. (S) TGS remains deeply ideologically opposed to Turkey's governing Justice and Development Party (AKP), which it regards as having an Islamist agenda. Its gambit to prevent Abdullah Gul from ascending to the presidency in April-May 2007 backfired and helped propel the AKP to an overwhelming parliamentary victory in July. The military is still Turkey's most respected public institution and wields more clout than opposition political parties. PKK actions in 2007 papered over political tensions. While senior military leaders understand that comprehensive non-military measures are needed to thwart PKK terrorism, they may be loathe to hand AKP a victory in the southeast. They may seek to slow-roll necessary political and social reforms, including a more attractive amnesty program for PKK members. In this context, we must encourage military leaders to look at the PKK problem holistically and to push for non-military approaches to supplement the use of force that will involve difficult and risky choices for the government and Turkey as a whole.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turk> ey

WILSON